

Message Text

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61

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-25 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 AID-20 DRC-01 /126 W

----- 113588

O R 212035Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6986

AMEMBASSY ROME

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 4587

USCINCOS FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, AR, IT (JOSE LOPEZ REGA)

SUBJ: SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTER RETURNS UNEXPECTEDLY

1. SUMMARY: DESPITE HIS STATEMENTS TO CONTRARY, LOPEZ REGAS RETURN YESTERDAY (JUN 20) WAS UNSCHEDULED AND UNEXPECTED. MOST LIKELY EXPLANATION IS THAT HE CAME BACK TO PROTECT HIS POLITICAL FLANKS. END SUMMARY.

2. LOPEZ REGA RETURNED UNEXPECTEDLY TO BUENOS AIRES YESTERDAY. WHEN NEWSMEN ASKED HIM WHY THE HURRIED RETURN, HE INSISTED THAT IT ACCORDING TO PLAN. HE HAD GONE TO ROME WITH VICE PRESIDENT BECAUSE HE HAD CERTAIN CONNECTIONS THERE WITH WHOM HE WISHED TO PUT HER IN CONTACT. BUT HAVING ACCOMPLISHED THAT AND HAVING MANY THINGS TO DO AT HOME, IT WAS NATURAL THAT HE WOULD RETURN. HE HOPED PERHAPS TO REJOIN VICE PRESIDENT LATER ON IN HER TRIP.

3. IN RESPONSE TO REFERENCES TO RUMORS THAT HIS RETURN WAS RELATED TO PERONS ILLNESS OR TO CABINET CHANGES, LOPEZ REGA REPLIED WITH FLAT NEGATIVE. THE PRESIDENT HAD NOTHING MORE THAN A BAD COLD, HE SAID AND THERE WOULD BE NO CABINET CHANGES.

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4. LOPES REGAS INSISTENCE THAT THERE WAS NOTHING UNUSUAL IN

HIS RETURN IS CLEARLY NOT TRUE. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT HAD INDICATED HE WOULD ACCOMPANY VICE PRESIDENT DURING ENTIRE TOUR AND HE HAD SO INDICATED TO AMBASSADOR HILL IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION END OF MAY. QUESTION THEN IS NOT IF BUT WHY HE RETURNED EARLY.

5. SPECULATION THAT RETURN PROMPTED BY PERONS ILL HEALTH CANNOT BE RULED OUT. GIVEN HIS AGE, THERE ARE ALWAYS POSSIBILITIES OF COMPLICATIONS EVEN TO COMMON COLD. AT MOMENT HOWEVER THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST PERON SERIOUSLY ILL. HE APPARENTLY IS NOT BED-RIDDEN. HE HAS BEEN SEEN UP AND ABOUT AT HIS OLIVOS RESIDENCE AND HAS RECEIVED A NUMBER OF VISITORS. PERONS HEALTH DOES NOT THEN SEEM SUFFICIENTLY COMPELLING MOTIVE TO HAVE CALLED LOPEZ REGA HOME.

6. THERE ARE ALSO RUMORS THAT HE CALLED HOME BECAUSE OF MAJOR DIPLOMATIC GAFFE IN ROME. PRESS REPORTING ON ROME VISIT HAS PLACED VICE PRESIDENT IN FOREGROUND ALMOST TO EXCLUSION OF LOPEZ REGA, BUT WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY BLUNDER ON HIS PART WHICH WOULD HAVE RESULTED IN HIS RECALL.

7. SEEMS MORE LIKELY THAT RETURN WAS PROMPTED BY SOME HURRIED NEED TO PROTECT HIS FLANKS. FOR SOME TIME NOW MANY IN GOVERNMENT AND PERONIST MOVEMENT HAVE COMPLAINED THAT LOPEZ REGA HAS BLOCKED KEY MEASURES AS WELL AS THEIR ACCESS TO PERON. WITH LOPEZ REGA OUT OF COUNTRY A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH AXES TO GRIND MAY HAVE GOTTEN IN TO SEE PERON. LOPEZ REGA, FOR EXAMPLE IS KNOWN TO HAVE SABOTAGED THE IDEA OF CREATING NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE. THOSE WHO FAVOR THE IDEA WERE TRYING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS ABSENCE TO CONVINCE PERON OF ITS VALIDITY. FURTHER LOPEZ REGA MAY HAVE BEEN WORRIED ABOUT POSITIONS OF SOME OF HIS COHORTS. IN DENYING RUMORS OF CABINET CHANGES, HE INDICATED HE HAD HEARD IN ROME THAT LABOR MINISTER OTERO WAS ON WAY OUT. THIS WAS NOT TRUE HE INSISTED. NONETHELESS REPORT MAY HAVE WORRIED HIM IT NOTEWORTHY AT ANY RATE THAT HE HELD HURRIED CONFERENCE WITH VANI AND VILLONE HIS TWO MOST TRUSTED LIEUTENANTS, IMMEDIATELY AFTER RETURN. PERONIST SOURCES INTERPRETED MEETING AS "COUNCIL OF WAR", SUGGESTING SOME URGENT PROBLEM. WE ARE ENDEAVORING TO DEVELOP MORE PRECISE INFORMATION AS TO NATURE OF TROUBLE IF ANY WHICH BROUGHT LOPEZ REGA HOME.

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8. FOR EMBASSY ROME: DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING RUMORS OF DIPLOMATIC GAFFE MENTIONED IN PARA SIX?
MONTLLOR

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NNN

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Draft Date: 21 JUN 1974
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: N/A
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